



A Pirate's Twelve Days of Christmas

by Philip
Yates

illustrated by
Sebastià
Serra

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To Maria:
Twelve days of Christmas just fer you—but wait—I have it wrong—
That's somethin' missin', lassie dear, from this cheery song.
I love you not fer just twelve days, fer how could I survive?
Twelve days of Christmas? Arrgh-humbug! Three hundred sixty five!
Love, P.Y.



To Judy Sue, April, Talia, and Mike of Studio Goodwin Sturges—thank you for sailing with me on the seas of literature, and providing such high spirits and good company along the way.
—S.S.



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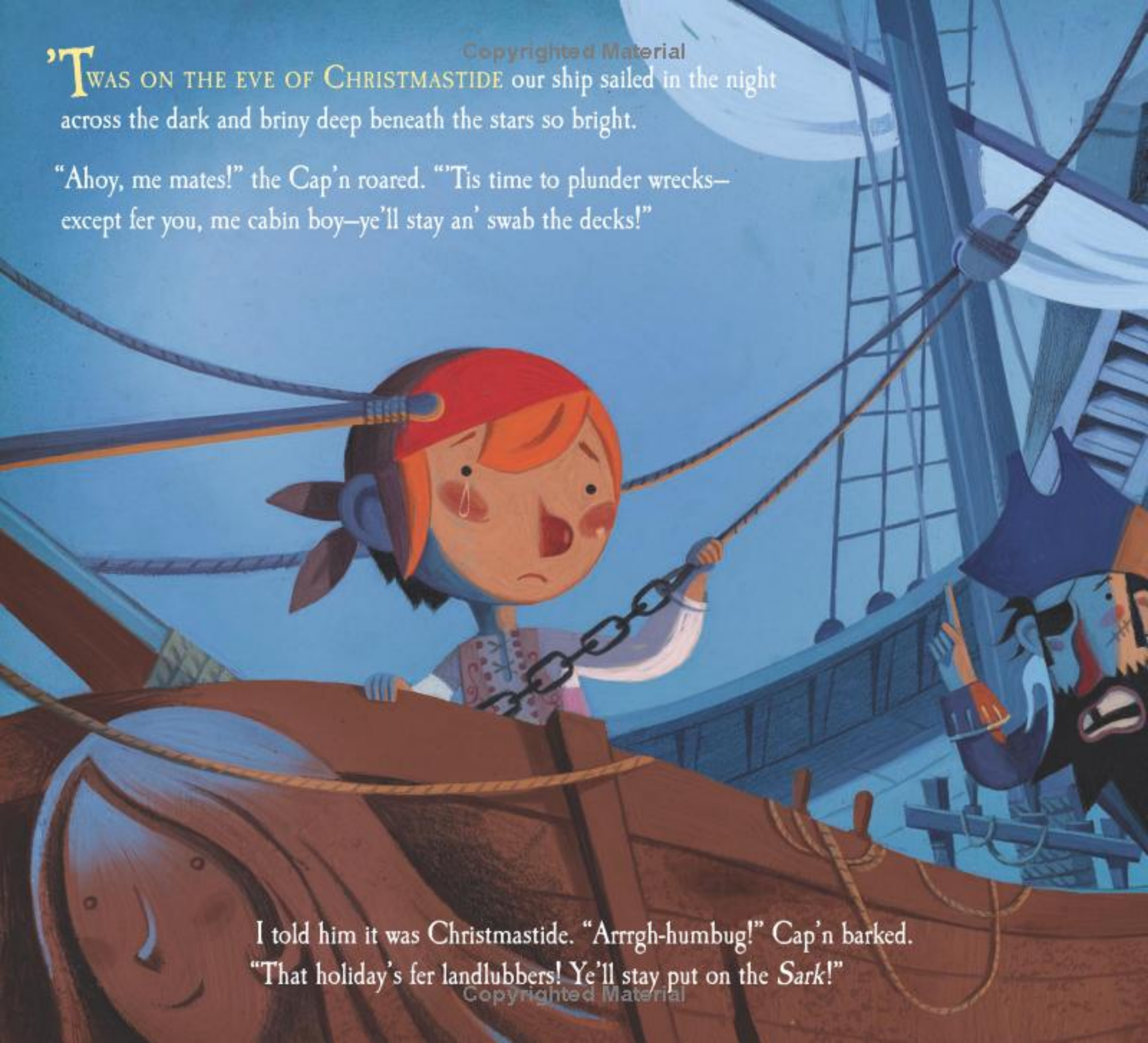
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STERLING CHILDREN'S BOOKS
New York

'T WAS ON THE EVE OF CHRISTMASTIDE our ship sailed in the night
across the dark and briny deep beneath the stars so bright.

"Ahoy, me mates!" the Cap'n roared. "'Tis time to plunder wrecks—
except fer you, me cabin boy—ye'll stay an' swab the decks!"



I told him it was Christmastide. "Arrrgh-humbug!" Cap'n barked.
"That holiday's fer landlubbers! Ye'll stay put on the *Sark*!"

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That night I dreamed of Christmas trees a-sparklin' 'neath the moon
an' jolly ol' Sir Peggedy with sacks full of doubloons.

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But when I woke I saw a sight: "What's this upon our ship?
AVAST!" I cried, an' danced a jig. A song burst from me lips:

On the first day of Christmas,
a gift was sent to me:

a parrot in a palm tree!

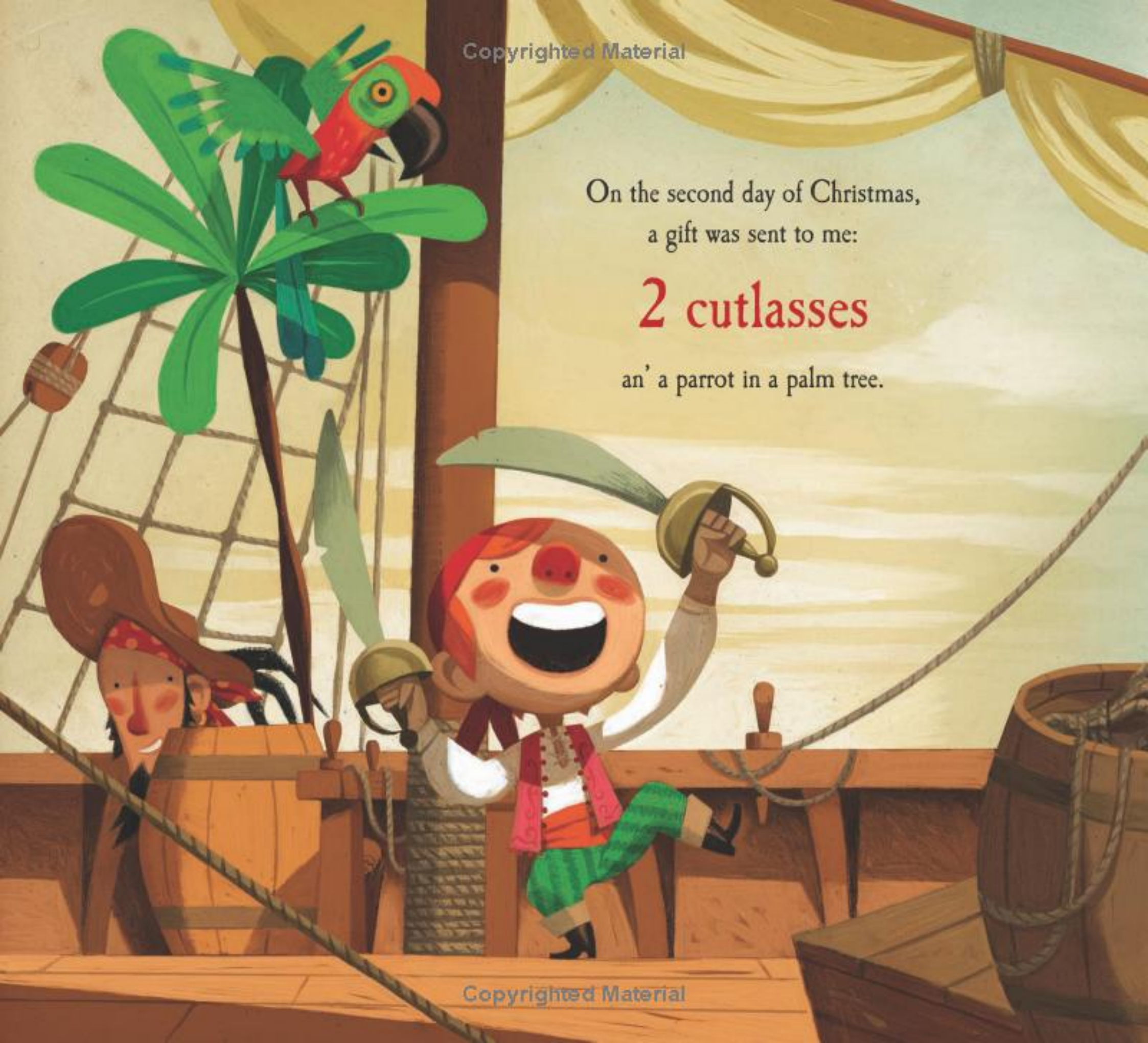
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On the second day of Christmas,
a gift was sent to me:

2 cutlasses

an' a parrot in a palm tree.





On the third day of Christmas,
a gift was sent to me:

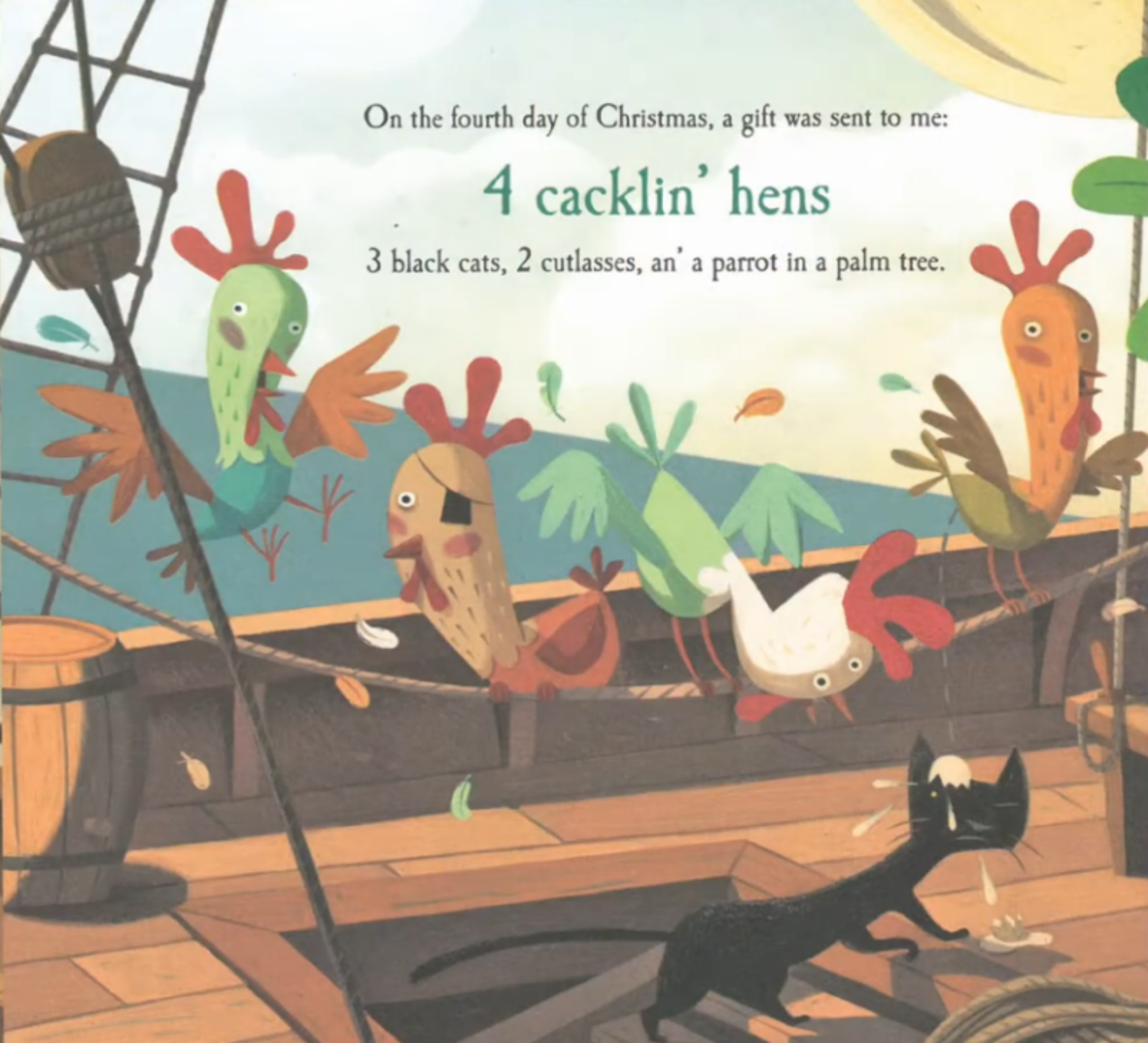
3 black cats

2 cutlasses, an' a parrot in a palm tree.


On the fourth day of Christmas, a gift was sent to me:

4 cacklin' hens

3 black cats, 2 cutlasses, an' a parrot in a palm tree.








On the fifth day of Christmas, a gift was sent to me

5 chests of gold!

4 cacklin' hens, 3 black cats, 2 cutlasses,
an' a parrot in a palm tree.



On the sixth day of Christmas,
a gift was sent to me:

6 Jolly Rogers

5 chests of gold, 4 cacklin' hens,
3 black cats, 2 cutlasses,
an' a parrot in a palm tree.



On the seventh day of Christmas,
a gift was sent to me:

7 monkeys swingin'

6 Jolly Rogers, 5 chests of gold, 4 cacklin' hens,
3 black cats, 2 cutlasses, an' a parrot in a palm tree.








On the eighth day of Christmas, a gift was sent to me:

8 dolphins swimmin'

7 monkeys swingin', 6 Jolly Rogers, 5 chests of gold,
4 cacklin' hens, 3 black cats, 2 cutlasses, an' a parrot in a palm tree.

A vibrant, stylized illustration of a pirate ship's deck and the surrounding ocean. On the left, a wooden ship with a skull on its side is partially visible. Several mermaids with long, flowing hair and colorful tails are depicted in various poses: two sit on a large rock at the top left, one sits on the ship's railing, one is on a rock in the middle, one is swimming in the water, and one is riding a dolphin. A large, colorful parrot is perched on the shoulder of a mermaid on the right. In the water, several dolphins are swimming, and a small figure is seen riding one. The scene is filled with musical notes, suggesting a festive atmosphere. The background is a warm, yellowish-green, and the water is a mix of blue and green.

On the ninth day of Christmas, a gift was sent to me:

9 mermaids singin'

8 dolphins swimmin', 7 monkeys swingin',
6 Jolly Rogers, 5 chests of gold, 4 cacklin' hens,
3 black cats, 2 cutlasses,
an' a parrot in a palm tree.



On the tenth day of Christmas, a gift was sent to me:

10 sloops a-sailin'

9 mermaids singin', 8 dolphins swimmin',
7 monkeys swingin', 6 Jolly Rogers,
5 chests of gold, 4 cacklin' hens, 3 black cats,
2 cutlasses, an' a parrot in a palm tree.







On the eleventh day of Christmas, a gift was sent to me:

11 swallows swoopin'

10 sloops a-sailin', 9 mermaids singin', 8 dolphins swimmin',
7 monkeys swingin', 6 Jolly Rogers, 5 chests of gold,
4 cacklin' hens, 3 black cats, 2 cutlasses, an' a parrot in a palm tree.




On the twelfth day of Christmas,
a gift was sent to me:

12 pirates cheerin'



11 swallows swoopin', 10 sloops a-sailin', 9 mermaids singin',
8 dolphins swimmin', 7 monkeys swingin', 6 Jolly Rogers,
5 chests of gold, 4 cacklin' hens,
3 black cats, 2 cutlasses,
an' a parrot in a palm tree.






"SURPRISE!" me buckos shouted. The Cap'n winked at me.
"Merry Christmas, laddie boy—we sent those gifts to ye."

"HOORAY!"

The Cap'n cried, "'Tis time fer bed. Avast! Anchors aweigh!
Fer jolly ol' Sir Peggedy will soon be on his sleigh!"
I thanked me hearties, one an' all, for every gift they'd sent,
then sang a little sleepy song, an' this is how it went:



The illustration shows a woman with a large, dark, curly wig and a red patterned shawl over a white dress, cheering with her arms raised. Next to her is a man with a red bandana and a white shirt, also cheering. They are on the wooden deck of a ship, with a large wooden barrel and rigging visible. The background is a night sky with a full moon and stars.





On the last night of Christmas, me mateys gave to me:

12 pirates snorin', 11 swallows roostin', 10 sloops a-driftin',
9 mermaids dreamin', 8 dolphins drowsin', 7 monkeys dozin',
6 flags a-fallin', 5 beds of gold, 4 nestin' hens,
3 cat naps, 2 sleepin' swords . . .





... an' a parrot a-snoozin' with me.





Pirate Glossary

"Avast!" ~ a pirate's way of saying "Stop!" or "Who goes there?"

Black Cat ~ cats are considered very good luck on board a pirate ship

Bucko ~ what a pirate calls his or her best friend (short for "buccaneer")

Christmastide ~ another name for the Christmas season

Dolphin ~ dolphins swimming alongside ships are thought to bring good luck

Doubloon ~ a Spanish gold coin pirates love to steal

Jolly Roger ~ the pirate's skull n' crossbones flag. When raised it is a signal meant to strike fear into the hearts of the pirate's victims.

Landlubber ~ “land lover,” someone who prefers to stay on land

Mateys and Hearties ~ a pirate’s shipmates

Plunder ~ what a pirate does when robbing loot from other ships

Sark ~ short for the *Black Sark*, the name of the ship in this book. One of the most famous pirate ships in history was called the *Cutty Sark*, which was a sailing ship with three masts.

Sloop ~ a small sailboat with a single mast, similar to a dinghy

Swallow ~ spotting a swallow means that land is near and smooth sailing is ahead

Thar ~ sometimes used for “there” and sometimes for “their”



Merry Christmas, me buckos!





PRAISE FOR *A Pirate's Night Before Christmas*

"Perfect fun, a treasure in every way."

—*Children's Literature*

"[A] pitch-perfect parody . . . the expertly rhymed text is packed full of pirate jargon . . . that beg[s] to be read aloud in rousing fashion."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

"This is a belly laugh of a book for young buccaneers."

—*Associated Press*

"The robust verse sails along with gusto . . ."

—*The Horn Book Magazine*

PRAISE FOR *A Pirate's Twelve Days of Christmas*

"[Y]ou'll get into the swashbuckling spirit in no time. . . ."

The pirate lingo and raucously detailed color-rich illustrations add seafaring flair . . ."

—*The Horn Book Magazine*

"[F]illed with swashbuckling action . . ."

—*Publishers Weekly*

"Avast, me hearties! Here be another bonny piratical parody ready for the readin' to the young'uns at the Christmas season."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

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ON THE FIRST DAY OF CHRISTMAS,
A GIFT WAS SENT TO ME...
a parrot in a palm tree!

PRAISE FOR A Pirate's Night Before Christmas

"This rollicking, seafaring version of Moore's poem will give pirate fans a chuckle. . . . a fun addition to the subgenre of wacky adaptations of the classic."

—*School Library Journal*

"[This book] will have you hoisting the Jolly Roger over your chimney . . . Perfect fun, a treasure in every way."

—*Children's Literature*